

## **Statement of L. Glenn Stowe**

### **Appropriations Committee**

**February 18, 2016**

My name is Glenn Stowe, and I live in Beacon Falls, Connecticut.

Connecticut Legal Rights Project helped me because they gave me a foundation to stand on when my disability benefit claims were being denied repeatedly.

Before I met with my attorney from CLRP, I had been pretty discouraged being denied my disability benefits time after time. When I found them and Attorney Cessna said she would take my case, it gave me hope again, that maybe there was some light at the end of the tunnel, and I might finally get the disability benefits I need and deserve.

If I wasn't able to use CLRP's services, I probably would have given up. I would have lost hope, given up, and would have probably matriculated to the streets. I am homeless right now, and have managed to couch surf with friends here and there, but that arrangement won't last forever. Knowing that I have an attorney to represent me and to be a voice of support and expertise has kept me hopeful that I will finally prevail. Disability benefits will make the difference between self-sufficiency and homeless for me, so having a lawyer in this case is of vital importance.

The loss or reduction of services offered by CLRP due to funding cuts would be highly detrimental to the community. There is no other resource out there like CLRP, which not only offers no-cost legal representation to the poor, but which is also staffed by dedicated attorneys and paralegals who treat us with dignity and respect and who understand and care about the struggles faced by those of us with mental illness. Before I learned about CLRP, I didn't think I had any options. If they are forced to close their doors due to budget cuts, I really won't have any. Please don't jeopardize our safety and stability by taking this important service away from us.